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3228-1f

COFFEE CULTURE ON HAWAII.

Reports by Men Who Have Visited the Plantation.

THEY DEAL IN THE FACTS ONLY.

Went Over All the Lands—Interviewing the Growers—Prospects and Yields—Different Methods—Kona Product Abroad—Successful Culture of Tea.

Kona coffee has a reputation in two countries already and its fame is spreading. In San Francisco the dealers are pushing it. They recognize its merit and list it as a standard article. One firm during last winter advertised Kona coffee by an electrical display at the corner of Market and Kearny streets. This effort earned thousands of customers.

A letter in which Kona coffee was mentioned prominently and in most flattering terms was lately received here from Germany. Coffee from the prepared Kona berry was served in a genteel company. One of the gentlemen present declared that such coffee was worth one dollar a pound.

It was remarked at the planters' meeting that the coffee industry in Hawaii was a struggling youngster. This is scarcely correct. That it can be grown successfully and that the market is waiting for it have been completely demonstrated. Messrs. John M. Horner and E. W. Barnard made a tour of the island of Hawaii to gather material for a coffee report to the planters. Their joint letter makes an up-to-date article on the subject and most of it here follows:

We left Laupahoehoe on the eleventh of September on our way to Hilo, visiting Mr. Kinney's coffee at Hilo en route. This place seemed decidedly too wet, at the time of our visit, for coffee. The subsoil was of a clayey nature and apparently retained too much moisture about the roots, and the trees seemed too much shaded to produce a profitable crop. Twenty acres were said to be three years old, and twenty acres only planted a few months. Mr. Kinney was away, but we were informed he intended planting a hundred acres more in a more favorable locality.

We passed through Hilo, and noticed that several of the gardens contained a few coffee trees, the majority of which were doing well, although only a few feet above tide water. In some cases the trees were large enough to show a good deal of blossom and fruit. The old Senter place, seven miles out on the volcano road, shows it has been neglected too long and is too much shaded for profit.

Mr. Rycroft's was the next place reached, and we were repaid for the laborious ride, in seeing his fine field of coffee which is coming into bearing, and the prospect is that he will get about two tons of coffee this season. Mr. Rycroft has thirty-five acres three years old, and fifteen acres newly planted in the most approved style, that is, in straight rows and no shade whatever.

We only saw a small portion of Mr. R. A. Lyman's place, owing to lack of guide. The portion we saw looked well and was being kept clean with cultivator and horse; the trees looked well and appeared about two years old.

The mission lands were next visited. Here we found the Goudie Bros. had a clearing of about twenty-eight acres which was being planted in the open, no shade at all, in rows six feet apart, their superintendent being a practical coffee planter from Ceylon. There is also some coffee planted here which belongs to the Mission, which is not doing very well, owing to neglect, too much grass and too dense a shade. The trees are four years old, look healthy, are topped at about from five to seven feet, but very few berries on the trees.

We next reached Olaa, where we found great activity in clearing and planting. Fully 300,000 plants are already out, and more are being put out. Over a thousand pounds of seed is being planted, besides the large nurseries which are ready to plant out at the present time, and the future of this district seems very bright with its rich lands and abundant rainfall. The land appears to be an older formation than any we passed over after leaving Hilo. The coffee trees and young plants showed a vigorous and healthy growth; no trees over two years old at present, and very few have yet attained that age. The land formation is such that the rain immediately disappears, however fast it may come down; no streams form, or puddles to sour the land. We believe the heavy rainfall will not interfere with the growth of the trees, but

whether it will prevent the setting of the fruit, as some allege, time will tell.

The Volcano House was one of our stopping places, and it seemed a great pity that a few coffee-trees are not planted and cared for at this place as an object lesson of coffee growing at a high altitude, that being a question of interest to all coffee-growers at present.

Next in order came Kau, and, although very little has been done thus far in coffee planting, we were led to believe there are lots of land suitable for producing this berry in the neighborhood of Kapapala, Hilea and Waihinu. At the latter place we saw some fine, healthy trees bearing well, and the remains of many native patches of coffee which were dying out through neglect and Hilo grass.

At J. M. Monsarrat's place, we noticed a disc-pulper which was doing good work, and also an inexpensive drying-house which is worthy of the attention of those who are trying to dry coffee in a wet climate.

At the Morgan, McStocker Company, in Kona, we found Mr. J. M. Davis in charge. He informed us he expected 10,000 lbs. of coffee this season from the wild groves situated on his high land. He was planting wild stumps ten feet apart, and wanted no other.

We next called on Mr. Charles Hooper, who has the reputation of getting the highest price for coffee. We found that it was just by a little more care in sorting for the market.

Passing on we reached the Hawaiian Coffee and Tea Company's plantation, above Kilauea, and found Mr. Miller busily engaged with a gang of men weeding a field of coffee near his house. This coffee looked well, and was planted out in good shape a few months ago, no shade. We also visited the upper lands of this company's plantation and found the coffee planted in all kinds of places, and looking vigorous. At Mr. Miller's house we saw the first washed coffee since leaving our homes; a fine sample of several hundred pounds, pulped with a Gordon pulper, fermented and dried in the sun. Mr. Miller is now erecting a drying-house and mill. The company has out 160 acres in coffee at present; one and a quarter acres from one month to two years. The oldest trees, topped at four and a half feet and six feet apart, are quite full of fruit, and a considerable number in the large fields have quite a sprinkling of berries on them, and they promise well for the next crop. These are set wider apart, and will be topped much higher.

Messrs. Scott, Bartels and others are planting, with fair prospects of success in this neighborhood.

We found wild coffee growing in the forests and by the roadside; but it has been planted without order or regularity, yet producing considerable coffee, and it was being harvested and prepared in various and wonderful ways. It speaks well for the Kona bean, that it retains so much virtue after all the abuse it gets in the modes of preparation as generally practiced in this district.

Leaving Kona we made for Hamakua where there are quite a number of Portuguese and others planting, but mostly in the shade and without much regularity and proper care. Reaching Kukui Plantation we found sixty-five acres set at two different elevations, one part being 1400 feet and the rest 2000 feet, in both of which the coffee looked very well and compared favorably with any seen on our trip both in growth and bearing, although a little wind-blown on the lower tract on the exposed ridges. This coffee is from two to three years old, planted seven by eight feet, and is being topped at six feet in height, and is just coming into bearing, and will possibly yield two tons of coffee.

In North Hilo E. W. Barnard has thirty acres of coffee in various stages of growth, and expects to get a ton of coffee this year. There are about a dozen others planting in this neighborhood who have in about thirty thousand plants, a small portion of which is commencing to bear. A number of other people are applying for land, and nurseries are being started, so that there will soon be quite a large area planted in this district.

We noticed on our trip that the Gordon pulpers are coming gradually into use, and wherever we found one of these the work was greatly improved. The Hawaiian Coffee and Tea Company are the only ones at present in Kona who are preparing their coffee in a first class method, their parchment coffee being a pleasure to look at. The general opinion of the old settlers seems to be that as the coffee will be sold in the local market, it is not worth while to go out of the old-fashioned methods to improve the quality or grade.

At the Hawaiian Coffee and Tea Company's place, we encountered our first and only tea growing and manufacturing. We were surprised at the development of this industry. The plants are two years old, and trimmed down to about two feet and a half in height. The company was actually producing a fair commercial article of tea, which your committee had the pleasure of seeing, handling and tasting. Our surprise was not so much in the growth, number of plants or quality of the tea, as in the methods of gathering and preparing it for market. We had been informed that the Chinese and Japanese teas were all prepared by hand. Here it is all done by machinery, and the human hand never has to touch it, which should be a recommendation. Your committee cannot see why an article equalling the famous English breakfast tea may

not thus be produced. Mr. Miller believes this can be produced for ten cents per pound. We are pleased with the ingenuity shown on this plantation; nothing was done by hand that could be as well done with a machine.

The picking of the tea by a machine that made no mistake was to be admired for its simplicity, cheapness and efficiency that it gathered by wholesale only young tender leaves, never old ones, although there were an abundance of the latter on the trees.

There were a number of people planting or preparing to plant coffee in the different districts, and they were, with but few exceptions, following the modes practiced by Mr. Miller, that is, to clear all shade and keep the land clear of all weeds the whole time.

The following is to Robt. Rycroft from J. A. Folger & Co., the San Francisco wholesalers. A copy was sent to McChesney & Sons, who are becoming coffee and tea factors:

DEAR SIR: We have before us your letter of the 9th inst., and also the sample of coffee you enclose.

We have had this sample shelled, by hand, of course, (as such a small sample could not be otherwise handled) and we find it to be a very nice article. The taste, of course, would seem to be a little rank, what is termed "grassy" taste, from the fact of its being so very new. This, however, would pass away in a short time after the coffee was shelled.

It is very hard for us to tell what it would be worth in the parchment, because the shrinkage of different coffees varies. We would much prefer, also, to have it prepared where it is raised.

Coffee grown wild in the islands (which we have all been accustomed to for the past number of years) has come to the market in such undesirable shape that it brought only the price of any other coffee in that particular state, but, like coffees from Central America, the better they are prepared and assorted, the better prices they bring. If people in the Hawaiian Islands desire to get full prices for their crop, they must prepare it in the best manner. We would offer a suggestion, that you prepare a small lot, anything from 200 pounds or 300 pounds up, that you wish, and ship it to us, that we may see exactly what you would be able to furnish to the trade. At present we do not look for any higher prices, the tendency being rather downward than otherwise.

As we have frequently written to people in the islands who are interested in the growing of coffee, until such time as there is a demand made for island coffee on its merits, we will be unable to get any greater price than for the same quality of Central American coffees.

I have asked another gentleman to give me his opinion on this coffee and I will enclose his letter. I consider his opinion very good indeed; he is broker here for nearly all the importers of Central American coffees.

We trust you will be able to send us a small shipment of this coffee, that we may make some effort to interest people in island coffees. For ourselves, we are enthusiastic over the future of the islands as a coffee growing country.

MAUI SCHOOLHOUSE BURNED.

A Case of Suspected Incendiarism at Ulupalakua Village.

A Community Quarrel That Was Bitter—Names in a Letter—First Personal, Then Political.

The schoolhouse at Ulupalakua, Maui, was burned to the ground last Wednesday morning. All reports agree that the fire was of incendiary origin. Hall passengers were talking about it.

A letter received by the Hall yesterday goes so far as to mention the names of several persons suspected of firing the building. Ulupalakua is a small settlement about fifteen miles from Wailuku. For more than a year there has been but little peace in the neighborhood. The first quarrel was a personal affair. As the community became involved politics were dragged into the disputes. The school very naturally became a subject for difference. Feeling over this ran high. A correspondent declares that destruction of the building is the culmination of the quarrel.

The schoolhouse stands entirely by itself and all theories of accidental firing are rejected by the people. They are certain that the torch was maliciously applied.

Several cases of incendiarism have convulsed Maui and a lot more will be heard of this one.

THE HAWAIIAN GAZETTE will be on sale today at the newsdealers and at this office. It contains all the news of the past few days. Secure a copy and send it along with your letter.